

WASHINGTON, DC -- As a part of her effort to strengthen state and local law enforcement agencies, Congresswoman Linda Sánchez last week introduced H.R. 3836 – The Ensure Timely SCAAP Reimbursements Act. The bill was referred to the Judiciary Committee for consideration.

“It’s unacceptable that the Department of Justice takes up to two years to reimburse state and local governments for the cost of incarcerating criminal aliens,” Congresswoman Linda Sánchez said. “This bill gets money back to local and state law enforcement agencies faster, protecting their budgets and allowing them to fund more programs that make our communities safer.”

The Ensure Timely SCAAP Reimbursements Act would require the Department of Justice to process requests made under the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program within 120 days of the reimbursement application deadline. In fiscal year 2006, which covered inmates housed between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2005, counties were not informed of their reimbursement funding until June 21, 2007, almost a two year delay. These delays place a financial strain on state and local law enforcement agencies, keep them from fully funding public safety programs, and prevent them from making necessary equipment purchases.

“Police departments shouldn’t have to choose between funding public safety programs and buying needed equipment because their money is tied-up in the reimbursement process for two years,” Congresswoman Sánchez said.

The legislation has bipartisan support. Republican Rep. Darrell Issa (CA-49) and Rep. Brian Bilbray (CA-50) have joined 17 other co-sponsors. Congresswoman Sánchez looks forward to working with members of both parties to protect the financial solvency of state and local law enforcement agencies.

Congresswoman Sánchez introduced other legislation earlier this year that would help states and localities get reimbursed for some of the costs of incarcerating criminal aliens before and during trial, reversing a Bush Administration rule that limited such reimbursement for post-conviction costs only. That legislation, H.R. 1512, the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program Reimbursement Protection Act, has been favorably reported by the Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law. It is scheduled to be marked up in the full Judiciary Committee this Wednesday.